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BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN HISTORY

*East and West through Fifteen Centuries: being a General History from B. C. 44 to A. D. 1453.* By Br.-Genl. G. F. YOUNG, C.B. Volumes I. and II. (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1916. Pp. xxvi, 611; xii, 674.)

THESE two volumes cover the first seven centuries, to the death of Leo the Iconoclast in the East and of Charles Martel in the West. The author hopes to cover the remaining seven hundred years in the next two volumes. The key-note to the work may be found in the preface: "I have also avoided long accounts of civil and financial administration, as these appear to be matters rather for the student than for the general reader." Consequently the volumes must be judged from the standpoint of their fitness for the general reader, and minute criticisms would be out of place.

The first portion, concerning "the tragedy of the Caesars", is easy reading. The treatment here, as elsewhere, is mainly biographical. General Young attempts to make the reader acquainted with the character and personality of each emperor, and with this object in view gives a portrait wherever an authentic one can be obtained. He also describes, sometimes in detail, the buildings erected by each emperor and furnishes excellent views of some of the more noteworthy. The treatment is purely chronological, and consequently at times, especially in the second volume, becomes somewhat scrappy. In order "to counterbalance this, the index has been so arranged that a particular group of matters can always be studied separately when desired".

An examination of the "points" on which the author especially prides himself shows the necessity of a warning to the "general reader", that usually when these are true they are not new, and when new they are not true.

In one main point this history differs from others. It has invariably been the custom to make a division between what is called secular history and what is called Church history, separate books being written on each of these supposedly different kinds of history. . . . Moreover, religion has been at the root of three-fourths of the most important events recorded in secular history.

The first statement, with its "invariably", is an example of the exaggeration of which the author is often guilty, especially with regard to religious matters. In the section on "matters concerning religion" in the first twelve chapters, Christianity alone is discussed; the worship of Isis and of Mithras is ignored; neither title occurs in a very full index of over one hundred columns. In religious matters, too, the author always writes from the standpoint of an orthodox member of the Church of England, which "at the present day holds the same doctrines that it did at its 'Birthday in 673'". He finds, for example, that "Gregory the Great has not had justice done to him. He has been

called the founder of the Medieval Papacy when he was a greater opponent of everything which that institution represented, and of the whole basis upon which it rested, than any other man in Europe. And at the same time he has received no honour for that which is his greatest glory", *viz.*, the repudiation of the title "Universal Pope".

"Another main point on which this history differs from others has regard to the period which is to be held as the zenith of the Roman Empire. . . . Any unprejudiced examination will show that it was in the 4th century that the empire attained its zenith, and not in the 2nd." Possibly if General Young had studied the civil and financial administration more closely and had not been biassed by his zeal for Christianity, he would not have enunciated this opinion. There are eighteen "other points upon which this history either takes a different view from that usually held, or brings to notice facts seldom recognized". Of these the most interesting is "the different view from the one usually held as to the reason why the western half of the Roman Empire fell before the northern races, and as to the lesson taught thereby". He considers that the cause of the downfall was the lack of universally compulsory military service in the Empire and the fact that the cradles were not kept filled. With regard to the latter point, he says:

Any nation can do this which really tries. Liberal assistance from the State for each child born (illegitimate children included), the bearing by the State of the cost of maintaining and educating all children wherever it is necessary, and above all the strict removal of any slur upon illegitimacy on the part of the State, will always produce the desired effect if the nation is in earnest on the subject.

These remarks "were written more than a year before the war now raging in Europe began. The strong parallel to the case of England in many particulars . . . is self-evident."

The most interesting portions of the work are some of the comments on military affairs, in which the author is especially versed. Some of the comparisons of Roman and British conditions are provocative of thought, and his account of the daring deeds of the early Moslems is made more vivid from the experiences which the English have had with similar fanatics in India. Although he praises many for their military exploits, possibly the individual to whom he gives the most unstinted praise is Justinian's great general, Belisarius, whose bravery, loyalty, and skill in military tactics under the most adverse conditions he admirably describes.

DANA C. MUNRO.

*The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: a History of the Osmanlis up to the Death of Bayezid I. (1300-1403).* By HERBERT ADAMS GIBBONS, Ph.D. (New York: The Century Company. 1916. Pp. 379.)

DR. GIBBONS breaks ground for a critical study of the early history of the Ottoman Turks, by describing in four chapters with abundant